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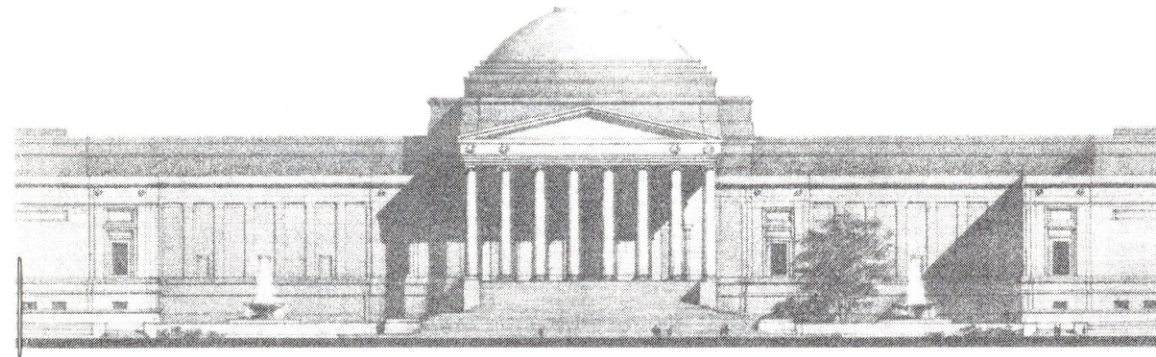
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pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

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National Gallery of Art
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The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,657th Concert

Hugo Wolf Quartet

Sebastian Gärtler and Régis Bringolf, *violin*
Gertrud Weinmeister, *viola*
Florian Berner, *cello*

February 3, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

String Quartet in E-flat Major, D. 87 (1813)

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: Prestissimo

Adagio

Allegro

Hugo Wolf (1860–1903)

Italienische Serenade (1887)

INTERMISSION

Schubert

String Quartet in G Major, D. 887 (1826)

Allegro molto moderato

Andante un poco moto

Scherzo: Allegro vivace con Trio: Allegretto

Allegretto; allegro assai

The Musicians

Founded in 1993, when its members were students at The Vienna Hochschule für Musik, the Hugo Wolf Quartet won the Fifth International String Competition in Cremona and took first prize at the Forty-fifth International G. B. Viotti Chamber Music Competition. The ensemble went on to win the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Special Prize and the European Cultural Award for Chamber Music. Since its critically acclaimed debut at the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Quartet has concertized in such prominent venues as Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Herkulessal in Munich, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, the Musikverein in Vienna, Philharmonie Berlin, Philharmonie Cologne, the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Symphony Hall in Birmingham, and Wigmore Hall in London. The Quartet has been featured in festivals such as Carinthian Summer, the Colmar Festival, the Edinburgh Festival, and the Schubertiade Feldkirch.

For its tenth anniversary in 2003, the Quartet established a cycle of concerts at the Konzerthaus in Vienna. Composers Zbigniew Bargielski, Friedrich Cerha, and Erich Urbanner wrote and dedicated works especially for this occasion. The Quartet has performed a number of other world premieres to high critical acclaim.

The ensemble has recorded for the Atlantis Art, Extraplatte, and Gramola labels and has appeared on numerous radio and television productions, including the BBC and Radio Berlin. It was granted permission to use the name of the late romantic composer Hugo Wolf by the International Hugo Wolf Society of Vienna. The Quartet uses a violin by Gioffredo Cappa, a viola by P. Mantegazza, and a cello by Niccolo Gagliano, all generously loaned by the Fazenda Ipiranga of Brazil.

The Hugo Wolf Quartet appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Marianne Schmocker Artists, Ltd., of Houston, Texas.

Program Notes

In 1813 a fifteen-year-old Franz Schubert left the Royal City College of Vienna, where his teachers included Antonio Salieri, to enroll in a teacher-training school, in deference to the strong wishes of his father. Salieri's renowned skill as a teacher is audible in the work Schubert completed in November of that year, the *String Quartet in E-flat Major, D. 87*. It shows remarkable maturity and skill on the part of the young composer.

The two three-measure phrases that introduce the main theme of the first movement (*Allegro moderato*) show flexibility of timing and a kind of humor not readily apparent in Schubert's other early works. After repeating the initial twelve-bar thematic idea, Schubert moves on to offer a transition passage of such breadth and reluctance to leave the tonic key that it almost functions as a second main theme. The actual second main theme, however, follows the transition and makes clever use of syncopated accents in the melody and rapid dotted-note accompaniment without losing its graceful sweetness.

Schubert moves away from classical models with the second movement (*Scherzo: Prestissimo*), which he puts as the second rather than as the third of four. The third movement (*Adagio*) can be likened to a spinning wheel as it moves steadily forward in a calm 6/8 meter. The lower instruments suggest the motion of the wheel, while a series of serene melodies in the first violin provides the thread. The finale (*Allegro*) reintroduces in its second theme a bouncing three-eighth note gesture that was heard at the opening of the first movement. The accompaniment moves between electrifying sixteenth notes and slightly more aristocratic triplets, occasionally breathing more deeply in chorale-like phrases. In this movement, Schubert seems to recall the best of his many fond impressions of the music of Vienna's recently departed musical hero, Joseph Haydn (1732–1809).

Hugo Wolf completed his *Italienische Serenade* between May 2 and 4, 1887, when he was largely preoccupied with creating vocal settings of poems by Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff (1788–1857). Indeed, the serenade relates quite closely to one of these vocal settings, *Der Soldat I*, dated March 7, 1887. It also has an element in common with another Eichendorff setting, *Das Ständchen*: both that *lied* and the serenade begin with some preliminary strummings on open fifths with repeated notes, as if the musicians are tuning their instruments.

Given the bittersweet texts of the related *lieder*, it is surprising to find Wolf in a comical mood as he writes this serenade. The first amusing feature is the mock tuning at the beginning. The music presents the tonic key of G major, but each passage ends with “wrong” repeated E-flats. The inner voices (second violin and viola) rectify matters in a pizzicato passage that restores the correct key, but the jocularly continues. The first movement plays itself out in rondo form and climaxes with a bold outburst in 6/8 time. In the development section, elaborate new countermelodies in the second violin and a recitative for the cello are answered at first mockingly, then more compliantly, by the other instruments. After some dance-like digressions and a return of the rondo theme, the serenade ends as it began, amid the thrumming of imaginary guitars.

The great musicologist and Schubert scholar Otto Deutsch (1883–1967) compiled a catalogue of Schubert’s works, which he rarely dated in his manuscripts. Deutsch’s catalogue comes as close as is humanly possible to a chronological ordering of the composer’s output. “Deutsch numbers,” abbreviated with a capital D, have become the standard not only for identifying Schubert’s works in concert programs but also for noting which works were most likely written close to one another in time.

Theologian M. Frank Ruppert, who has made a lifetime study of the music of Schubert, proposes a theory regarding Schubert’s creative process in his forthcoming book, *Franz Schubert and the Rose-Cross Mystery*. Like most German-speaking intellectuals of the early romantic period, Schubert was deeply affected by and involved with the poetry of his contemporaries as well as the philosophy and theology that lay behind it. Particularly influential

at the time was a neo-gnostic worldview that had its roots in the writings of Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832), Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel (1770–1831), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), and Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805). Essential to this worldview was the concept that an ideal world exists beyond the present day-to-day grim reality, and that world can be reached only by way of a journey through a mysterious region, which most writers identified as death. Adherents to this world view saw themselves as seekers of true wisdom, which was often characterized as a woman of ideal beauty (known to the ancient Greeks as Sofia), who could guide the wanderer through his difficult but necessary journey. Ruppert maintains that Schubert’s relationship with this philosophy, as presented in the poetry of his contemporaries, was so close and so intense that some poems remained with him and shaped his creative activity even after he had finished setting them to music. In his analysis of Schubert’s symphonies, string quartets, and other chamber works, Ruppert finds again and again that the mood and sequence of musical ideas in an instrumental movement correspond to the mood and sequence of ideas in the text of a *lied* that, according to its “Deutsch number,” was contemporary with the instrumental work.

As Schubert began his last string quartet, the *Quartet in G Major*, D. 887, he was suffering from syphilis and was preoccupied with thoughts of death. He would readily have recalled a text he set to music as D. 842, “Totengraber Heimweh” (Homesickness of the Gravedigger), by Jacob Nicolaus Freiherr von Craigher de Jachelutta (1797–1855). The cosmic question with which the poem begins —“O mankind, O life! For what purpose?”—is echoed by Schubert’s introduction, which is symphonic in scope and structure yet contemplative. The fugue that follows the introduction has a jagged, desperate theme, as the poem continues: “Dig out, scrape in! Day and night, no peace! This pushing and shoving, where does it get you? To the grave, the grave deep under!”

The second movement (*Andante un poco moto*) is more lyrical and somewhat darker in character. Schubert, who suffered bitter disappointment in love, often turned to poetry that concerned the pain of separation from the beloved. He may have been recalling “Lied der Mignon,” a poem by Goethe that he had

set to music as D. 877, just a few weeks before beginning to write this quartet movement: "Only one who knows longing knows what I suffer! Alone and cut off from all joy, I look into the firmament. Ah! He who loves and knows me is far away. I am reeling, my stomach is burning. Only one who knows longing knows what I suffer!"

In the third movement (*Scherzo: Allegro vivace con Trio: Allegretto*), Schubert finds a vision of love and beauty that transforms the dark thoughts he has explored thus far. He expresses this vision in music of inexorable drive and energy. Yet even in the midst of this blissful thought, Schubert recalls that love involves both happiness and suffering. Another poem that he had recently set to music, "Mondenschein," by Franz Schober (1798–1882), also expresses this transformation and this dilemma, and it may well have been in Schubert's thoughts as he wrote the *Scherzo*: "The magic flower of the moon smiles and soulfully invites the paradise of love to enter our dusky night world. . . . Look there! The fields have changed! The old earth is gone; I see a garden of silver, with perfumed scents, bathed in golden mist and magical light. . . . But the song of the nightingale reminds the tender heart of the real world, where even the most blissful sound awakens the deep pain of love."

The final movement (*Allegretto; allegro assai*), with its frenetic triplets, its rapid changes in dynamics, and its sudden shifts from the minor to the major mode and back, could well have been inspired by the text of Schubert's *Tiefes Leid* (Deep Grief), D. 876, a poem by Ernst Schulze (1789–1817):

I have been parted from all rest and drift about on a wild flood;
In one place only do I find peace—that is the place where
everything rests.
And even when the wind howls eerily, and the rain comes
falling down cold,
I would much rather dwell there than in this fickle world.

For just as dreams pass without leaving any trace,
and one drives away the next, my mad life plays with itself.
False hope is never willing to give way;

Dread and toil are never prepared to leave with hope!
Only those beings who are eternally silent, eternally pale,
never promise anything and never fail.

I do not awaken them with my steps in their dark solitude.
They do not know what I have suffered, and none of them is
disturbed by my deep grief.
My soul can lament more freely near the one whom I truly
loved;
Certainly that cold stone will not tell me—Ah!—that my pain
saddens her too!

Program notes by Stephen Ackert

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Orchestra of New Spain
Grover Wilkins, conductor

Music of the Spanish Court in the Eighteenth Century

February 10, 2008
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court